

# *Sketch*

---

*Volume 30, Number 2*

1964

*Article 8*

---

## Storm Beginning

Ervin Wolff\*

\*Iowa State University

Copyright ©1964 by the authors. *Sketch* is produced by The Berkeley Electronic Press (bepress).  
<http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/sketch>

and know it was a complete lie—because Mr. Crowse wouldn't do anything like that. But now it didn't mean much, except that the stranger didn't think it was good.

His mother didn't say anything; she seemed resigned to letting herself be paraded like some spectacle. She just seemed too tired to fight. What was it? What was happening?

"Take a good look at her!" the stranger kept demanding. "Your mother, a whore out sleeping with some guy while 'm away! Whaddya thinka her now!?"

Preston didn't really know what to think. Everything was swirling around in his head, "bitch" and "whore" and "sleeping with Mr. Crowse" and dull, flat, smackings. And the stranger stood there, challenging, demanding. What could he say, how could he say, how could he say what? Suddenly he turned and ran, blind, bumping into a chair, flinging open the back door and out into the grey fall morning. What was it, what was there, who was there? He was lost and falling and spinning and he ran, ran towards—towards what? Somehow, somewhere, something had been broken, something was changed and would never be the same again, and, even though he didn't understand what, he understood; It Was. He finally just dropped to the ground in the grass field at the end of the block and started to sob, broken, rending sobs that tore at his very insides.

In the fall, in the death quarter of the year, it began to rain, slowly, softly, and it fell gently on the boy. He would be very wet when he got home.

## Storm Beginning

*by Ervin Wolff*

Lying, I see, out  
above toes of crossed shoes, trees.  
elves' ears soup bubbling  
in a gray saucepan, and stirred  
by black sticks. At left  
a burner comes on, roaring.